

Because I could not stop for Death (479)

Because I could not stop for Death -
 He kindly stopped for me -
 The Carriage held but just Ourselves -
 And Immortality.

We slowly drove - He knew no haste
 And I had put away
 My labor and my leisure too,
 For His Civility -

We passed the School, where Children strove
 At Recess - in the Ring -
 We passed the Fields of Gazing Grain -
 We passed the Setting Sun -

Or rather - He passed us -
 The Dews drew quivering and chill -
 For only Gossamer, my Gown -
 My Tippet - only Tulle -

We paused before a House that seemed
 A Swelling of the Ground -
 The Roof was scarcely visible -
 The Cornice - in the Ground -

Since then - 'tis Centuries - and yet
 Feels shorter than the Day
 I first surmised the Horses' Heads
 Were toward Eternity -

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About this Poem:

In a letter to Abiah Root, Dickinson once asked, "Does not Eternity appear dreadful to you . . . I often get thinking of it and it seems so dark to me that I almost wish there was no Eternity. To think that we must forever live and never cease to be. It seems as if Death which all so dread because it launches us upon an unknown world would be a relief to so endless a state of existense."

Author:

Emily Dickinson



Born in 1830 in Massachusetts, Emily Dickinson is considered, along with Walt Whitman, the founder of a uniquely American poetic voice.

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